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cation of heat, but more slowly without it. Perhaps, therefore, the metallic *oxides* might be employed in marking linen subject to the oxymuriatic acid process, as containing a considerable portion of oxygen; but such colours can be effectually removed by the vegetable acids. Printers' ink is not affected by either.

To explain the quere of your correspondent C. D. it is to be remarked, that solar light has the power of producing a certain degree of combustion with the oxygen of the atmosphere, which is in this case disqualified for supporting further combustion; and of course, when a fire-place is exposed to the solar light, the inflammable matter it contains, must necessarily die away, unless it can be supplied with purer atmospheric air than that which is exposed to the action of the sun.

As we are on the subject of *gasses*, I would be glad to be informed through your magazine, whether the wind known under the title of the *Sinoom*, has been chemically examined; and whether there be any more effectual mode of guarding against it, than what has been mentioned by Bruce.

I am yours, TYRO.

To the Editor of the *Belfast Magazine*.

SIR,
LAIRESSE, in his Art of Painting,
on the subject of appropriate

symbols, deduces the crescent in the Turkish arms, from the circumstance of the establishment of the Roman court in Byzantium, by Constantine. He insinuates that it is the silver crescent, which distinguished the descendants of the senators chosen by Romulus, and has been assumed by the Ottomans as a mark of their honourable connection with the once mistress of the world.

I am apt to think, we might, on examination, be able to trace many of the Roman practices, by turning our attention to those of Constantinople.

The punishment, for instance, of the *bow-string*, may in all probability have been derived from a similar practice adopted in Rome, for the punishment of capital offenders.

We have it on the authority of Salust, that Lentulus, Cethegus, and such of the partners in Catiline's conspiracy as were apprehended, were delivered over to the executioner, who, *strangled* them privately in prison, *Laqueo gulam frigere*.

We observe the same mode of punishment, and the same secrecy observed on the occasion, at this day, in Constantinople; can this be considered a fortuitous coincidence in their systems? I should be glad to have the opinion of some of your correspondents on the subject. X.Y.

July 12th, 1808.

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCHES OF REMARKABLE PERSONS.

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH OF WILLIAM KENNEDY.

THE privation of the sight is perhaps more easily endured and less prejudicial than that of most of the other senses. Poets, the foremost in renown, have been incapable of the perception of external objects. The two finest heroic poems, the *Iliad* and the *Paradise Lost*, are the immortal productions of the Blind. The eyes of Homer and of Milton "rolled in vain and found no dawn;" yet in the forceful expression of the latter, were their minds "inly irradiated, and they have sung of things invisible to mortal

sight." The contemplation, however, of abstract ideas by the blind, which depend not on vision, is by no means extraordinary, nor of those objects that relate to the other senses; for the privation of one sense quickens the perception of the rest, while sensibility of intellect and strength of natural reason, appertain to the blind as well as to those who are blessed in the full perfection of the senses.

Our recollection of two extraordinary examples of this kind in science and philosophy is too recent to require to be impressed here, for all in this neighbourhood remember the lectures

of Moyes and of Davidson in the different branches of mechanics and natural philosophy. The latter, though quite blind, illustrated his ideas by a complete set of most ingenious experiments, and as he explained by his eloquence the Phenomena of nature, he managed a difficult and various philosophical apparatus with perfect ease and precision. It remains for us to record the powers of another of the blind, who, though he has no claim to the genius of poesy, nor has ever expatiated in the regions of philosophy, yet has he by the delicacy of the *touch*, arrived at a most unexampled perfection in the execution of different pieces of mechanism, which in others would require all the aid of sight. The subject of this short notice is WILLIAM KENNEDY of Tanderagee, in the county of Armagh, who has been blind from his infancy. The best account of his extraordinary progress in mechanics, is to be found in his own simple narrative, which the author of this article procured from his dictation.

"I was born near Banbridge, in the county of Down, in the year 1768, and lost my sight at the age of four years. Having no other amusement, (being deprived of such as children generally have) my mind turned itself to mechanical pursuits, and I shortly became projector and workman for all the children in the neighbourhood. As I increased in years, my desire for some kind of profession or employment that might render me not burthensome, though blind, induced me to think of music; at the age of thirteen, I was sent to Armagh to learn to play the fiddle; my lodging happened to be at the house of a cabinetmaker; this was a fortunate circumstance for me, as I there got such a knowledge of the tools and manner of working as has been useful to me ever since. Though these things engaged my mind and occupied a great part of my time, yet I made as decent a progress in music, as any other of my master Mr. Moorehead's scholars, except one. After living a year and a quarter there, I returned home, where I made, and got tools so as to enable me to construct different pieces of household furniture. Not being satisfied with the occupation of cabinet-maker, I purchased an old set of Irish

Bagpipes, and without instruction, it was with difficulty that I put them into playing order. I soon however became so well acquainted with the mechanical part of them, that instruments were brought to me from every part of the neighbourhood to be repaired. I found so many defects in this instrument that I began to consider whether there might not be a better plan of it than any I had yet met with, and from my early instruction in music, and continual study of the instrument, for indeed I slept but little, in about nine months time (having my tools to make) I produced the first new set. I then began to clock and watch making, and soon found out a clock maker in Banbridge, who had a desire to play on the pipes, and we mutually instructed each other. From this time I increased in musical and mechanical knowledge, but made no more pipes though I repaired many, until the year 1793, when I married, and my necessities induced me to use all my industry for the maintenance of my wife and increasing family; my employment for twelve years was making and repairing wind and stringed instruments of music. I also constructed clocks both common and musical, and sometimes recurred to my first employment of a cabinet maker. I also made linen looms with their different tackling. My principal employment however is the construction of the Irish bagpipes, of which I have made thirty sets in the little town I live in, within these eight years past."

Thus ends the simple sketch of the life of William Kennedy in his own unadorned narrative. His modesty however has induced him to suppress several particulars very much to his credit, as one of the most ingenious improvers of the Irish bagpipe.

This imperfect national instrument, as it is a national one, deserves with the Harp the peculiar cultivation of those who feel the musical strains of their own island, whether melancholy or gay, whether amorous or martial, which it modulates to the delight of the native. We are all acquainted with the sympathetic effect of national music on the Swiss when engaged in foreign warfare, far from his native mountains; one air in particular, which, if he was employed in de-

fence of his country would no doubt excite him to noble daring, has been known to occasion an incurable longing for a return to his country: such a sympathy might be directed to better and more patriotic purposes than that of hiring him to fight the battles of others. The effect of the bagpipes in rallying Frazer's regiment at Quebec, in the victory gained by Wolfe over the French, has been recorded in the anecdotes of that battle; and the inspiring airs of the wounded piper, in the glorious victory of Vimiera, is a fact too recent to require repetition. Would that the Scotch General Dalrymple had felt the electric inspiration of the *Highland* piper and his *Pibroch*!

Pennant derives the Irish pipes from a period of very remote antiquity, and the observation of that most indefatigable antiquary is confirmed by the early testimony of Aristides Quintilianus. The compass of the *Highland* bagpipe is confined to nine notes, while that of the Irish extends to more than two octaves. The modesty of our blind mechanic, as we have said before, has prevented him from enlarging on several points which we shall here beg leave to notice, illustrative of his ingenuity as an improver of this instrument. In this respect, indeed, he deserves the character of a discoverer, as his additions to the Irish pipes will do away many of their imperfections, and he has had the great merit of adapting them with simplicity, for the management of the instrument is nearly as easy as formerly. To the chanter he has added keys, by which some flats and sharps, not capable of being before expressed on the instrument, are now produced with ease. He has also added *E in alt.* being one note above the original compass of the instrument. Two additional notes are given by him to the Organ-stop, and some of its notes are now capable of being varied from naturals to sharps, according to the key on which the tune is played.

The basses or *drones*, as they are commonly called, formerly only in correct tune when playing on some particular keys, are now constructed so that their notes can be varied as the key varies on which the tune is played.

There is also another alteration worthy of notice; by the addition of two large keys, managed with the wrist, a part of the basses, or all of them, can be stopped and opened at pleasure. The particulars of these most ingenious alterations would require terms too technical to be introduced here, but they shall be the subject of a future number.

In short, this blind mechanic is as yet unequalled, for elegance of workmanship and perfection of scale, in one of our favourite national instruments. From a rude block of ebony, a fragment of an elephant's tooth, and a piece of silver....having first formed his lathe and his tools, he shapes and bores the complicated tubes, graduates the ventages, adapts the keys, and forms an instrument of perfect external finish and beauty "that discourses most eloquent music," capable of expressing the finest movements in melody, and by no means deficient in harmony: and all this by the exquisite sensibility of the *touch*, for he is stone blind, and quite incapable of distinguishing the black colour of ebony from the white of ivory. Under poverty therefore and physical privation of the most overwhelming kind, he has gradually brought his mechanical powers to this pitch of comparative perfection! What an incentive to perseverance under difficulties much less insuperable! It is hoped that the readers of this article will be induced to inquire into the actual authenticity of the statement, and be led to encourage such extraordinary application and ingenuity. W.

Some Account of Don JOSEPH CELESTINE MUTIS, Chief of the Spanish Botanical Expedition to Sanicé de Bogotá, in South America....Translated from the Annals of the Museum of Natural History at Paris.

THE naturalists of the day may not unaptly be divided into three classes: the first consisting of such as happily unite the qualifications of actually observing the spirit of their studies, and of recording in a perspicuous manner the progress of their labours; the second, of those who, unfortunately for the public, observe without writing; and the third of those who